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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Social Development Summit adopts Declaration and Programme of Action; world leaders pledge to confront "profound social problems" facing disadvantaged.

+ Secretary-General declares potential to solve world's social problems has never been greater.

+ Secretary-General meets with Croatian President to discuss new plan to keep United Nations peace-keepers in Croatia.

+ WFP and UNHCR appeal for funds to counter acute food shortages threatening Rwanda and Burundi refugees.

+ Charter Committee recommends General Assembly initiate procedures to delete "enemy State" clauses from United Nations Charter.

+ Week-long Congress on Public International Law opens at United Nations Headquarters.

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Leaders from 118 countries adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action to address the underlying causes of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, as the World Summit for Social Development concluded today. The Summit was the largest gathering of heads of State and government and the first to address at the highest government level, the major social challenges which breed unrest, hamper economic development and impede a lasting peace.

The Copenhagen Declaration contains a set of 10 commitments, which will form the basis of the international community's drive to confront the structural causes and distressing consequences of "profound social problems". The Programme of Action recommends international and national measures aimed at eliminating inequities within and among countries and fostering social development policies and programmes.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

At the Summit, Denmark announced debt forgiveness to poor countries totalling a billion kroner, and the Chancellor of Austria said his Government would write off bilateral credits worth over $100 million. The President of the Republic of Korea said his Government would provide technical training for more than 30,000 people from developing countries by the year 2010. The Vice-President of the United States unveiled an initiative to channel 40 per cent of the country's development assistance through non-governmental organizations. The President of France and Prime Minister of Norway called for consideration of international taxation systems to finance social development-related programmes.

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The potential for cooperation to solve the world's social ills had never been greater, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as he addressed heads of State and government Saturday at the World Summit for Social Development. The east-west divide had disappeared, and the north-south confrontation was giving way to a more global approach, the Secretary-General said. The new economic and social challenge was not confrontation, but the widening divide between those who could make it on their own and those who could not and would need the international community's cooperation. The spirit of the Summit's agenda must reflect a sense of solidarity within nations and between nations which did not allow the privileged to ignore the poor, vulnerable or marginalized.

The Secretary-General said today's acute social ills, including crime, drugs, disease, urban decay and declining standards of education, all had social consequences for human security. Social problems, which were once confined within borders, now spread across the world and required global attention. True and lasting success could only be achieved through patient and deliberate efforts. Governments would need to act in partnership with experts, parliamentarians, grass-root and religious organizations, trade unions, community associations, businesses, scientists and non-governmental organizations to solve these problems.

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The Secretary-General met with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in Copenhagen Sunday to discuss the plan for continuing the United Nations peace-keeping presence in Croatia. The plan, which is subject to Security Council approval, involves scaling down the number of troops from 12,000 to 5,000 and redefining the mandate, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The Secretary-General was pleased with the development and would discuss details of the plan with the Croatian Government once the Council had made a decision, the spokesman said. Both men will meet in New York at the end of this week. Leaders of the Croatian Serbs in Knin welcomed the decision and their so-called "Foreign Minister" said they would pursue peaceful negotiations in the search for a political solution.

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Meanwhile, civilians in Sarajevo, including two young girls, were killed by sniper attacks over the weekend. A United Nations plane carrying Special Representative Yasushi Akashi was hit by heavy machine gun fire, which pierced the fuselage and narrowly missed United Nations personnel on the plane. Mr. Akashi said he would not be intimidated by the deliberate attack. He continued scheduled meetings with Bosnian government officials and later with Bosnian Serb leaders in Pale.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have urged the international community to act quickly to counter dramatic food shortages threatening more than 3 million Rwandese and Burundi refugees. The WFP said $385 million in aid is needed this year, but only $155 million has been pledged so far. Only half the food required for April would be available, and more severe shortfalls were likely in May and June. The food pipeline for July, August and beyond was nearly empty.

Daily food rations in the refugee camps were being cut in March as a contingency measure, and relief organizations were extremely worried that reduced rations could spark tensions and serious security problems in the camps and surrounding villages. The WFP and the UNHCR said political solutions leading to early repatriation of refugees and displaced persons could not be achieved when hundreds of thousands of civilians were insecure about the food supply.

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The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization has approved a report dealing with the deletion of the "enemy State" clauses from the Charter. The report also addresses such issues as assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter and Model Rules for the Conciliation of Disputes between States.

The Committee, which ended its two-week session Friday, is mandated to examine issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the strengthening of the role of the Organization. The report recommended that the General Assembly, at the earliest appropriate session, announce its intention to initiate procedures to delete the "enemy State" clauses from the Charter.

In another recommendation, the Committee invited the General Assembly to establish an open-ended working group to consider the implementation of the Charter provisions related to assistance to third States affected by sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

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More than 1,000 people from 145 countries will attend a Congress on Public International Law at United Nations Headquarters beginning Monday. The

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Congress, which is being held within the framework of the United Nations Decade of International Law (1990-1999), is to assist the legal profession, new States and the general public.

The week-long Congress will discuss the codification, progressive development and implementation of public international law. Practising lawyers, corporate counsel, ministry officials, judges, law teachers and diplomats are expected to attend.

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